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Measures to eliminate international terrorism

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Letter dated 11 March 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Over this past weekend, the Palestinian campaign of terrorism against Israeli civilians has continued unabated.

On Saturday evening, 9 March, at approximately 8.30 p.m. (local time), a group of people were standing outside the Gerami Hotel in the Israeli city of Netanya following a party for a bridegroom when they came under fire from Palestinian terrorists. Two gunmen, one of them disguised as an Israeli police officer, opened fire on the crowd with automatic rifles and then stormed the lobby of the hotel, hurling grenades and firing indiscriminately. Two people — one of them a nine-month-old baby — were killed in the attack and approximately 50 others were wounded, many of them seriously.

Some two hours later, a Palestinian terrorist entered a popular outdoor café in the Rehavia neighbourhood of Jerusalem and detonated a powerful explosive charge. At the time of the attack, the café was teeming with patrons following the conclusion of the Jewish Sabbath. The force of the explosion ripped through the café, killing 11 people and wounding more than 50 others, 10 of them seriously.

Yesterday afternoon, a Palestinian terrorist posing as a worker approached the Israeli community of Netzarim and killed an Israeli soldier, Staff Sergeant Kobi Eichelboim, age 21, shooting him in the head at close range. The terrorist also wounded the community's head of security, Pinhas Seltzer, before being stopped by security officers.

Also yesterday, at approximately 11 p.m. (local time), in the coastal Israeli city of Ashdod, a Palestinian terrorist opened fire on a banquet hall while a Bar Mitzvah celebration was taking place. A 12-year-old boy was moderately-to-seriously wounded by gunshots to his arm and knee. A far greater tragedy was averted when the terrorist's rifle jammed and he was forced to flee on foot. He was later apprehended by police officers.

With the exception of yesterday's attack in Ashdod, the Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades, the terrorist arm of Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat's Fatah

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faction, claimed responsibility for all the attacks described above. The terrorist organization Hamas also claimed responsibility for the Jerusalem attack.

These attacks come in addition to several attempted attacks that were thwarted by Israeli security forces or by alert civilians. Last week, a Palestinian terrorist attempted to perpetrate an attack on a Jerusalem café similar to the one that occurred on Saturday but was foiled by a waiter and a security guard who pushed the terrorist outside and contacted the police. Yesterday, security forces intercepted a booby-trapped car on its way to Jerusalem to carry out a car bombing. In a separate incident in northern Jerusalem, border policemen stopped a Palestinian — armed with a Kalashnikov assault rifle, several ammunition clips, two hand grenades, and a flak jacket — who intended to carry out a terrorist attack in the city.

These attacks and attempted attacks come in addition to scores of incidents that have occurred in the 17-month campaign of terrorism that has been detailed in my letters dated 5 March 2002 (A/56/857-S/2002/233), 4 March 2002 (A/56/854-S/2002/222), 27 February 2002 (A/56/843-S/2002/208), 20 February 2002 (A/56/828-S/2002/185), 19 February 2002 (A/56/824-S/2002/174), 11 February 2002 (A/56/819-S/2002/164), 8 February 2002 (A/56/814-S/2002/155), 28 January 2002 (A/56/798-S/2002/126), 22 January 2002 (A/56/788-S/2002/104), 18 January 2002 (A/56/781-S/2002/86), 16 January 2002 (A/56/774-S/2002/73), 11 January 2002 (A/56/771-S/2002/47), 4 January 2002 (A/56/766-S/2002/25), 13 December 2001 (A/56/706-S/2001/1198), 4 December 2001 (A/56/678-S/2001/1150), 30 November 2001 (A/56/670-S/2001/1141), 27 November 2001 (A/56/663-S/2001/1121), 12 November 2001 (A/56/617-S/2001/1071), 5 November 2001 (A/56/604-S/2001/1048), 24 October 2001 (A/56/506-S/2001/1011), 19 October 2001 (A/56/492-S/2001/990), 17 October 2001 (A/56/483-S/2001/975), 8 October 2001 (A/56/450-S/2001/948), 5 October 2001 (A/56/444-S/2001/943), 3 October 2001 (A/56/438-S/2001/938), 24 September 2001 (A/56/406-S/2001/907), 20 September 2001 (A/56/386-S/2001/892), 17 September 2001 (A/56/367-S/2001/875), 7 September 2001 (A/56/346-S/2001/858), 4 September 2001 (A/56/331-S/2001/840), 30 August 2001 (A/56/325-S/2001/834), 27 August 2001 (A/56/324-S/2001/825), 13 August 2001 (A/56/294-S/2001/787), 9 August 2001 (A/56/286-S/2001/780), 8 August 2001 (A/56/280-S/2001/775), 6 August 2001 (A/56/272-S/2001/768), 27 July 2001 (A/56/225-S/2001/743), 26 July 2001 (A/56/223-S/2001/737), 17 July 2001 (A/56/201-S/2001/706), 13 July 2001 (A/56/184-S/2001/696), 3 July 2001 (A/56/138-S/2001/662), 2 July 2001 (A/56/131-S/2001/656), 21 June 2001 (A/56/119-S/2001/619), 19 June 2001 (A/56/98-S/2001/611), 18 June 2001 (A/56/97-S/2001/604), 13 June 2001 (A/56/92-S/2001/585), 11 June 2001 (A/56/91-S/2001/580), 4 June 2001 (A/56/85-S/2001/555), 30 May 2001 (A/56/81-S/2001/540), 25 May 2001 (A/56/80-S/2001/524), 18 May 2001 (A/56/78-S/2001/506), 11 May 2001 (A/56/72-S/2001/473), 9 May 2001 (A/56/69-S/2001/459), 1 May 2001 (A/55/924-S/2001/435), 23 April 2001 (A/55/910-S/2001/396), 16 April 2001 (A/55/901-S/2001/364), 28 March 2001 (A/55/863-S/2001/291), 27 March 2001 (A/55/860-S/2001/280), 26 March 2001 (A/55/858-S/2001/278), 19 March 2001 (A/55/842-S/2001/244), 5 March 2001 (A/55/821-S/2001/193), 2 March 2001 (A/55/819-S/2001/187), 14 February 2001 (A/55/787-S/2001/137), 13 February 2001 (A/55/781-S/2001/132), 2 February 2001 (A/55/762-S/2001/103), 25 January 2001 (A/55/748-S/2001/81), 23 January 2001 (A/55/742-S/2001/71), 28 December 2000 (A/55/719-S/2000/1252), 22 November 2000 (A/55/641-S/2000/1114),

20 November 2000 (A/55/634-S/2000/1108) and 2 November 2000 (A/55/540-S/2000/1065).

Rather than fighting terrorism, as is his obligation, Chairman Arafat has permitted a vast terrorist infrastructure to flourish in the territories under his control and has given his support to extremist elements that celebrate the murder of civilians. Even as he purports to condemn terrorism, forces affiliated with Chairman Arafat's Fatah faction continue to proudly claim responsibility for attacks which deliberately targeted innocent Israeli civilians. For these reasons, Israel holds the Palestinian Authority and its Chairman directly responsible for these latest attacks.

The first step towards any political settlement in the region must begin with a complete and unconditional cessation of violence, as called for in both the Mitchell report and the Tenet understanding, both of which have been accepted by the Palestinian side. In facilitating this process, the international community must affirm that any deliberate targeting of civilians is a totally unacceptable practice that places its perpetrators outside the bounds of civilized behaviour. The international community must further demand that the Palestinian leadership take genuine action against the terrorist organizations that it harbours in its territory.

Until such time as the Palestinian leadership takes seriously its signed commitments to act against terrorist organizations that operate freely in its territory, Israel will be forced to take the steps necessary to ensure the security of its citizens. The Palestinian refusal to fulfil its obligations to fight terrorism means Israel's security precautions are the only thing standing between a Palestinian suicide bomber and a crowded Israeli restaurant or shopping centre.

No political process can advance while the deliberate targeting of civilians is perceived by one side as a legitimate tactic for the advancement of its political agenda. Making political concessions under the threat of further violence and terror will not advance our common objectives of achieving a ceasefire and ultimately a settlement of the conflict, but will only whet the appetite of extremists for further violence and further concessions. Only by declaring the absolute illegitimacy of heinous terrorist tactics can we pave the way for a return to a process of dialogue and negotiations.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 166, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yehuda **Lancry**
Permanent Representative